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ABSTRACT

The Halliwick Method originated in England where in 1949 James McMillan developed techniques for helping handicapped individuals become independent swimmers. Based on the adaptation of scientific and hydrodynamic principles to the behavior of the human body in water, the Halliwick Method emphasizes the goal of individual independence. Instruction is on a one-to-one basis. No buoyant aids are used. This manual contains a pictoral explanation of the Halliwick techniques and includes only the basic principles of the method. (JD)

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The Halliwick Method

"Water Freedom for the Handicapped"

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THE HALLIWICK METHOD

"Water Freedom for the Handicapped"

Division of Curriculum and Instruction
Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
Milwaukee Public Schools

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FOREWORD

The Halliwick Method has been in practice for more than a quarter of a century. However, like many educational methods developed outside of the United States, the growth in this country has been slow. The primary reason for its lack of growth has been the scarcity of written information. Thus, it has taken a great deal of trial and error working with selected students in the Gaenslen School physical education program to develop this material. Sincere appreciation is extended to the students for the many hours spent in the Gaenslen swimming pool. These students are Roger Florczak, Mark Hubbard, Kelly Schmidt and Charlotte Vaughn.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword.....iii

The Halliwick Method..... 1

Water Entry..... 2

Water Adjustment and
Basic Positioning..... 6

Lateral Rotation..... 9

Vertical Rotation..... 13

Turbulance and Buoyancy..... 18

Water Exit..... 20

Group Acitvities..... 21

Resources..... 32

THE HALLIWICK METHOD

The Halliwick Method originated in England where in 1949 James McMillan developed techniques for helping handicapped individuals become independent swimmers. Based on the adaptation of scientific and hydrodynamic principles to the behavior of the human body in water, the Halliwick Method emphasizes the goal of individual independence. Instruction is on a one-to-one basis. No buoyant aids are used.

The following pages contain a pictoral explanation of Halliwick techniques. Only the basics are included here. For further information, instructors are urged to refer to one of the resources in the bibliography.

Though the Halliwick Method can be used to advantage in teaching any disabled person to swim, it is of particular benefit when used with individuals who are severely physically handicapped. Once basic Halliwick techniques are learned, the swimmer can then go on to further refinement of swimming skills and more standard swim progressions. The basic purpose of the Halliwick Method is water freedom. After that is achieved, anything is possible!

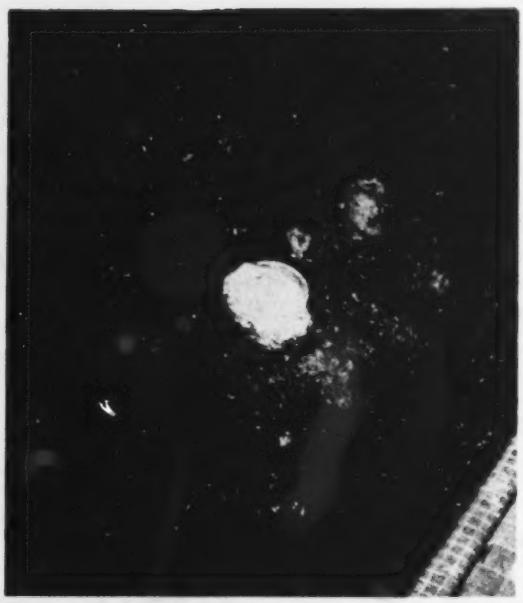
WATER ENTRY

The beginning student enters the Water with assistance from the instructor. The student sits on the side of the pool (with support from an aide if needed). The swimmer leans forward and reaches for the shoulders of the instructor. The instructor stands in a well braced forward/backward stride position and reaches toward the rib cage of the swimmer.

The swimmer leans forward and the instructor assists in lowering the swimmer's body into the water.

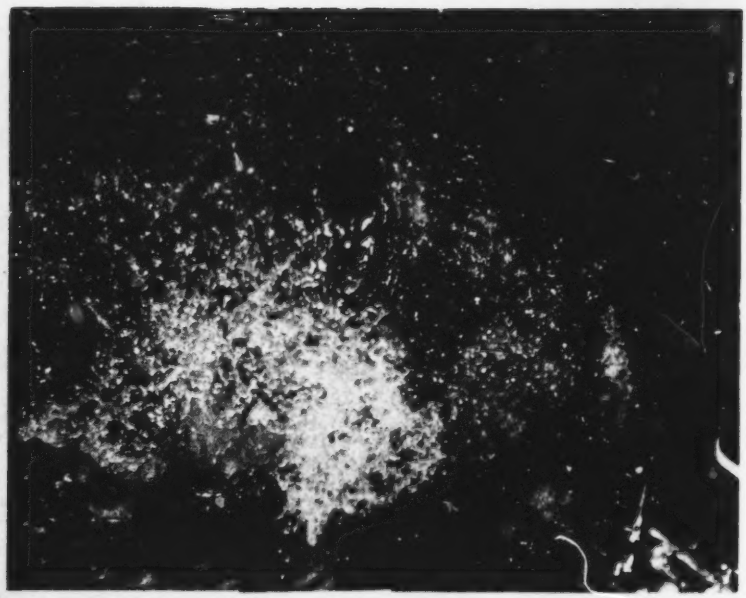
Once in the water, both the swimmer and the instructor should keep their shoulders under the water at all times. The instructor provides only minimal support, allowing the student's body to support itself as much as possible. Kangaroo jumps can be done in this position to aid in water adjustment.

Students who have good breath control and who have some degree of skill in the lateral roll enter the pool in a more independent manner. Starting from a seated position on the side of the pool, they fall in forward and once in the water, execute a lateral roll, coming to the surface and assuming a supine position. The instructor stands ready to assist the student with the roll if necessary. Tucking one shoulder under and turning the head in the direction of the roll will facilitate the action for the swimmer.



Advanced swimmers enter the water directly from their wheelchairs. The chair is placed at the edge of the pool, brakes locked and steadied from behind. Footrests are removed, and if there is a gutter the gutter space is blocked so that the student's feet do not get caught. The instructor stands in the water and back from the side.

The student moves forward in the chair as far as possible. Assistance may be necessary.



The student then reaches forward toward the water and tips the head forward and falls in. The instructor does not attempt to catch the swimmer.

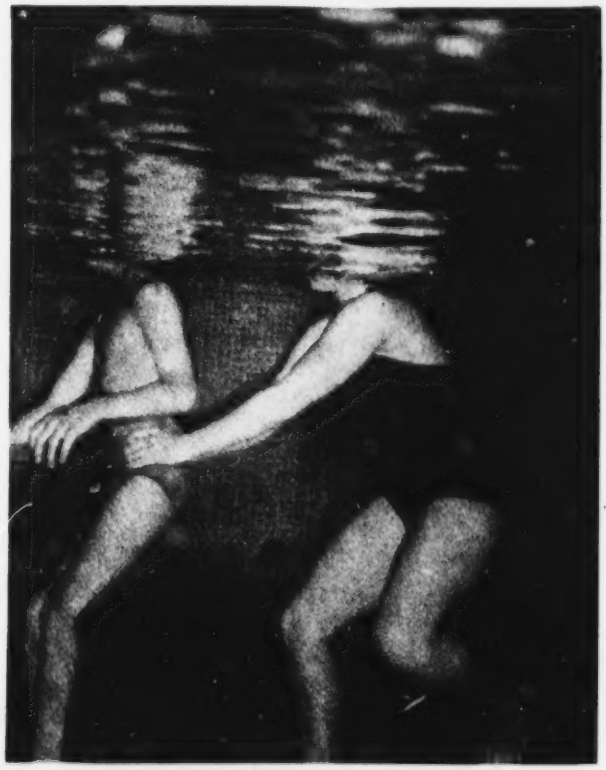
Once in the water the swimmer executes a lateral roll by tucking the shoulder and turning the head. The instructor can assist with this roll, if necessary, by placing the hands on the student's rib cage and aiding the body turn. The instructor should not attempt to lift the student as the body will rise to the surface due to its natural buoyancy.

Once the roll is completed, the student will be floating in a supine position. (Note: Remember that a swimmer should float to the surface and then roll.)

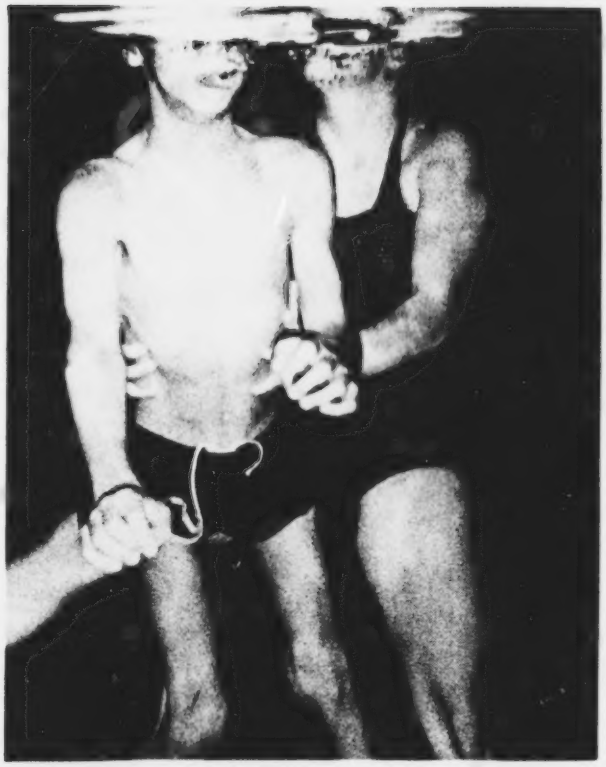
Note: This entire skill is for advanced Halliwick swimmers only. Good breath control is required. This skill should only be performed in water depth over the head of the swimmer. The instructor may have to tread water.

As a lead-up, swimmers should practice recovering to a supine position after being thrown through the air by the instructor.

THE BASIC WORKING POSITION: The instructor holds the student at approximately rib cage level, not under the arm pits. This frees the student's arms for use in balance. Both the student's and the instructor's shoulders are under the water. The student is vertical in the water. The instructor provides only enough support to keep the student's mouth out of the water. This is the position for walking, bicycling, kangaroo jumps, blowing, and moving from prone to supine and back again for change of positions.



Basic mobility and water adjustment involve having the student learn to move under the student's own power in the water. In the basic instructor/student position the student is encouraged to walk in the water and bicycle in the water. As the student moves the legs, the instructor walks forward. The student should be encouraged to use the arms to help movement and maintain balance. The instructor provides only enough support to keep the student's mouth out of the water. At this point, the student remains in a vertical position.



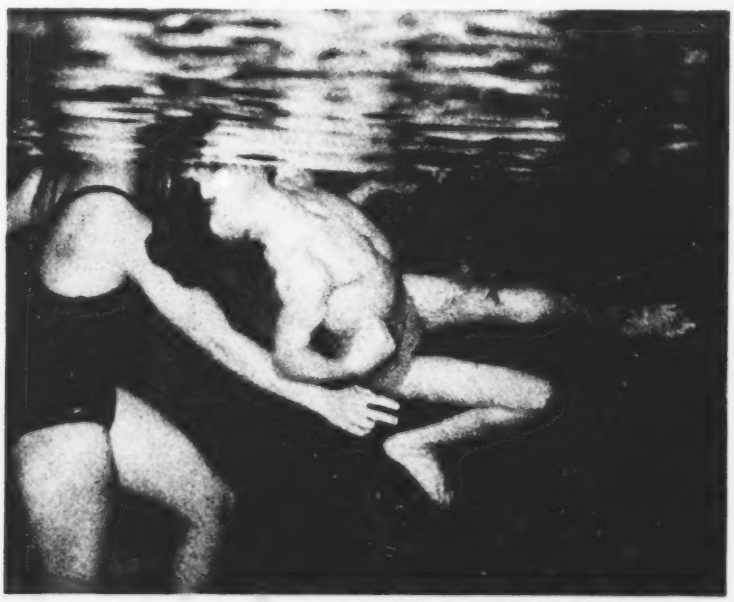
BLOW! Whenever the student's mouth is anywhere near the water, the student should blow -- make bubbles -- hum. Whatever the student can do to expel air. Starting the very first lesson, BLOW. It should eventually become automatic so that everytime the mouth is near the water the student blows. Then, when the student actually submerges the head, the blowing will be automatic also. Blow while walking, bicycling, kangaroo jumping, snaking. Combine blow with as many other skills as possible.

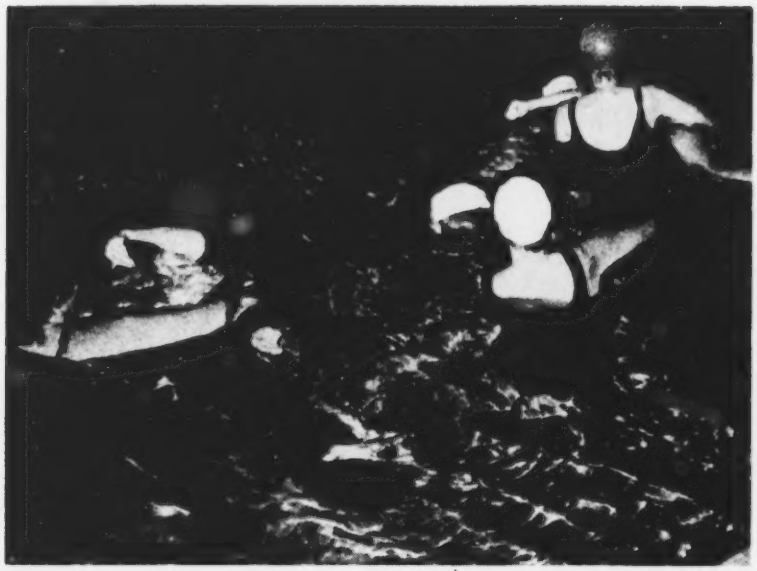
LATERAL ROTATION

Lateral rolling is an important skill for it allows the swimmer to move independently from a prone to a supine position -- from a position of having the face in the water to a position of rest with the face out. Learning to roll to the side, means that the swimmer has to realize that it is the head that controls the body's position. The student is again held at rib cage level with the instructor slightly to the side of the student away from the direction of the roll. The instructor provides only enough support to keep the student's head on the surface in a supine position. No attempt is made to hold the swimmer's head. The swimmer should control this. The instructor can verbally cue the swimmer to look at the ceiling or look up. Then the swimmer's body is gently tipped to one side. The swimmer is then encouraged to attempt to regain the stable supine position by turning the head to a position opposite to the roll. The instructor turns the student's body away from the instructor and encourages the student to look back at the instructor. When the swimmer does turn the head back the body should then be allowed to return to the stable, supine position, again with minimal support.

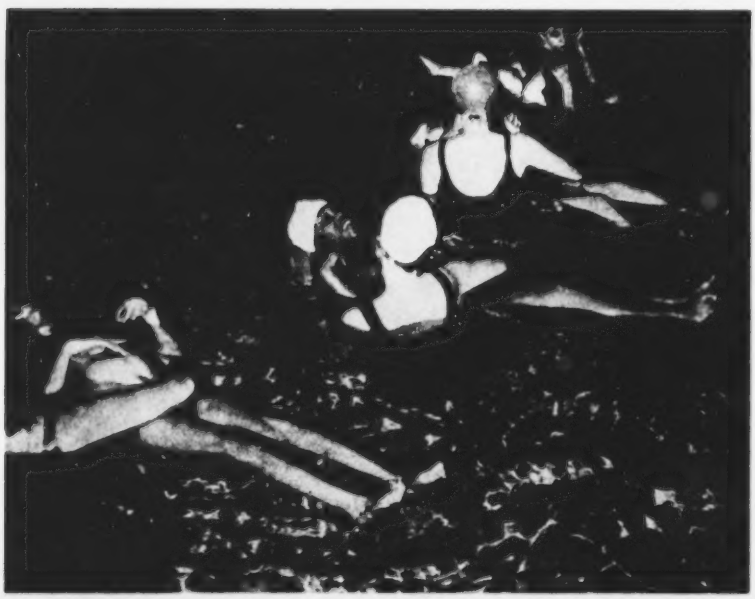
A Lateral Roll.

The instructor rolls the student from a supine to a prone position. The student then turns the head to the side to roll on the long axis of the body and return to the supine position. Initially this roll is not continuous. The student rolls one direction to prone and then rolls back to supine by moving in the opposite direction. (Note: the student must be able to blow and control the breathing to accomplish this skill.) The instructor can facilitate the roll at the rib cage if necessary. Support, however, should be minimal, especially during the return roll. This allows the student to feel the natural buoyancy of the body and work with it. Partial rolls should be practiced to both sides. Once a student can do a partial roll, a full 360 degree roll can be attempted.





When a student can successfully roll back to supine from a prone position, the student is ready to perform a full 360° roll. To facilitate this the instructor takes a position to the side of the student at about the waist. The instructor reaches across the student with the closer arm and helps the student to roll toward the instructor. The roll is continued all the way around until the swimmer returns to the supine position. This roll should as much as possible be under the control of the student as the head and arms are used to turn. The instructor only provides stability and assistance to achieve the final supine position. Students should also be reminded to blow out through the entire roll. Being able to perform a full 360° roll is a big part of achieving water freedom.

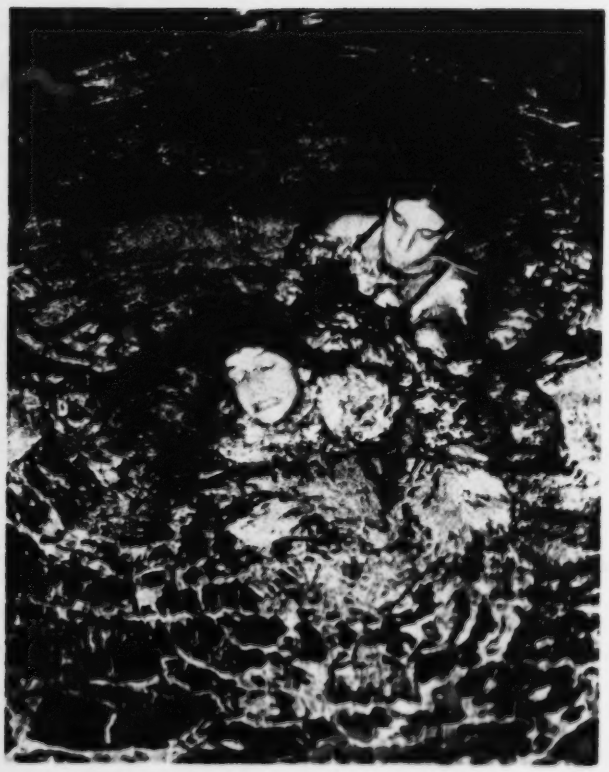


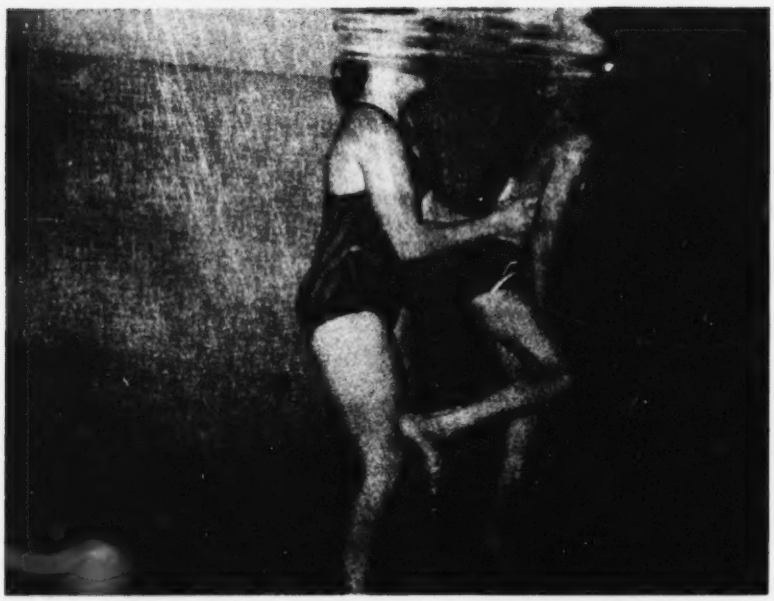
VERTICAL ROTATION

Vertical rotation means being able to move the body from prone to supine and back to prone by passing through the vertical. Practice begins at the side of the pool with the instructor standing behind the student, hands lightly placed at student's rib cage. To leave the wall, the student tilts the head back and lets go of the wall. As the student leans back, the body is allowed to assume its natural buoyancy level. The instructor should not touch the swimmer's chin or head but rather just remind the swimmer to look up and back. To return to the wall the swimmer should tip the head forward and try to blow on/in the water. As the head goes forward the feet will go down. Reaching the wall can be facilitated if the swimmer extends the arms forward towards it. The swimmer's body will rotate on the hands of the instructor. No lifting is necessary and the swimmer's shoulders should remain under the water.

When the student has developed some breath control, it is important for the student to learn to control the body when moving from the prone to supine positions, passing through the vertical. This not only helps the student to control the body in the vertical position, but also gives the student another means of assuming a rest/ breathing position.

The student is instructed to lean forward, placing the entire face in the water. The instructor should maintain only a loose hold on the student. Thus, when the face is placed in the water, the student's body moves from vertical to prone. When the student wishes to return to vertical and take a breath the head should be lifted back and the feet will lower. The hands of the instructor serve as a fulcrum. The hands do not provide support.





The swimmer must learn how to recover to the vertical position from the supine position. To achieve the supine, instruct the student to look up, tilt the head back, lift the chin, and look at the ceiling. As the head goes back the feet will lift. To counteract this movement and allow the body to return to the vertical, the student should bring the head forward and blow into the water. Reaching forward with both arms will also facilitate this movement. In the beginning stages, the instructor should tip the swimmer's body slightly off balance backward and have the swimmer bring the head forward to regain the vertical. As this becomes a comfortable movement, the swimmer can practice moving from a complete supine position to the vertical. When this is achieved, the swimmer can practice moving from supine through the vertical to the prone position and then back to the supine. When a swimmer does this with complete independence, a great achievement has been made!

Once a swimmer can move from prone to vertical and from supine to vertical, an entire vertical rotation can be put together. This involves moving from prone directly to supine with only a momentary pass through the vertical. After a brief rest in supine the swimmer then rotates back to prone. Water freedom comes when a student can do this without any instructor assistance.

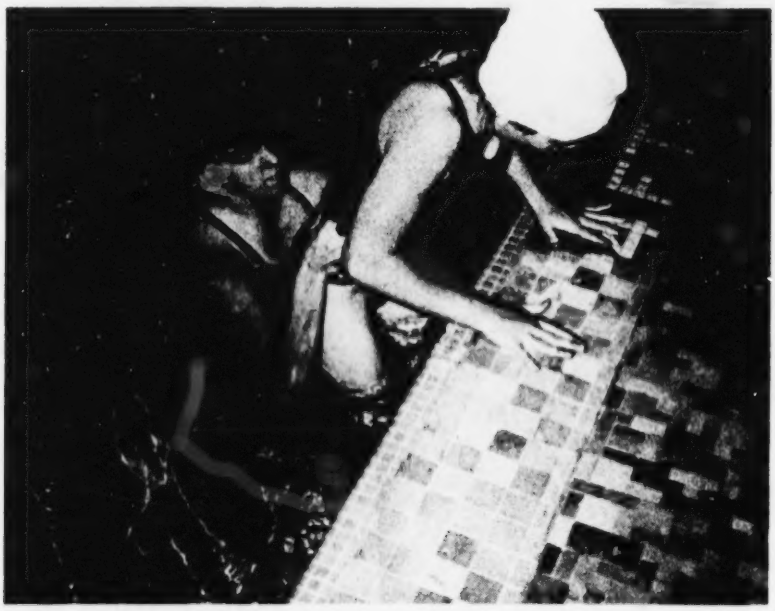
TURBULANCE AND BUOYANCY

Learning to move with and/or in spite of turbulance is important. The swimmer on the right is learning to float comfortably in spite of turbulance generated by the instructor. The swimmer is adjusting the balance as water conditions change. The student on the left is being moved through the water in the supine position with the aid of turbulance caused by the instructor. Here the instructor is at the head of the student, walking backward and using a breast stroke-like pull slightly under the head and shoulders of the student. The turbulance that is created is pulling the swimmer in the standard direction of movement for the supine position. It then gives the student a chance to get used to locomotor movement in the water. The student must also maintain balance in response to the turbulance.

Buoyancy is extremely important. Here the swimmer is being helped to experience the buoyant effect of the water. The instructor submerges the student and then lets go. The student will float right back to the surface of the water where he or she can be assisted to the vertical or supine positions. It is important that the student have some breath control before this activity is tried. It is an excellent means of proving to students that they do float, for in this activity each student can actually feel the body rise.

WATER EXIT

Exit from the pool is also accomplished with as little assistance as possible. The instructor stands with the student facing the side of the pool. Holding the student at the rib cage, on the count of three the instructor lifts the student up and over the edge of the deck. The student assists this lift as much as possible using the arms. Once over the edge of the deck the instructor assists again by lifting the legs as the student pushes with the arms. Again the student is encouraged to be as independent as possible.

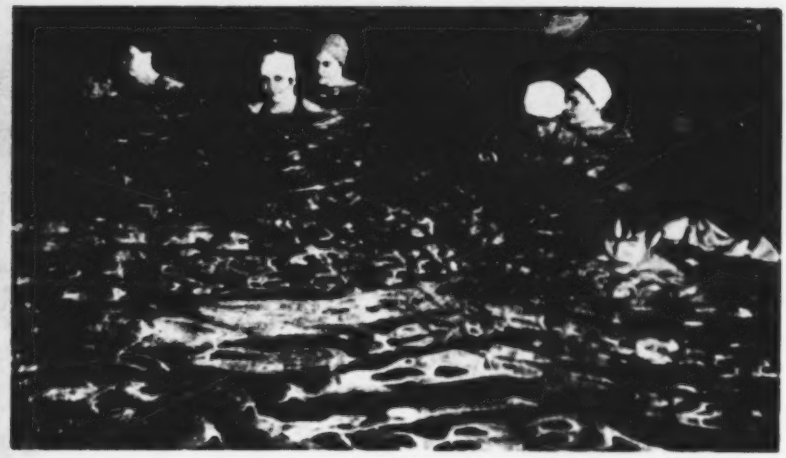


GROUP ACTIVITIES

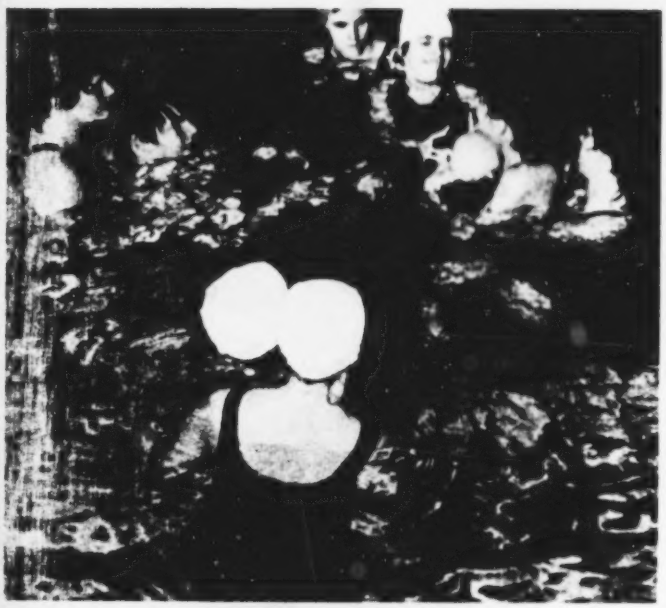
The Halliwick Method is a method of one-to-one instruction. However, all of the Halliwick activities are designed for group participation. Students participate in groups made up of student/instructor pairs with one instructor leading the group. In the group situation, students have other handicapped students as behavior models.

Though each student has the same instructor every swim period, there are many activities involving changing and exchanging partners. This breaks the monotony of working with the same person all the time. Many of the group activities are game oriented or can be made into games. Even walking across the pool can become a game if the students try to get across first.

The following section contains both group skill drills and activities. For safety purposes, the group should always remain where each instructor can stand up. The size of the group is usually determined by the size of the shallow water area and the number of instructors available. Group activities make up the majority of the lesson time. The rest is spent in working on individual problems.



Group activity is extremely important for water adjustment. Walking and kicking through the water, walking and blowing bubbles, circle bubbles and a game of pass the ball are all fun ways of getting used to the water.



Group practice of lateral rolls begins with work on a tip to the side. Students should try to look back toward their instructors and balance back into a stable supine position.

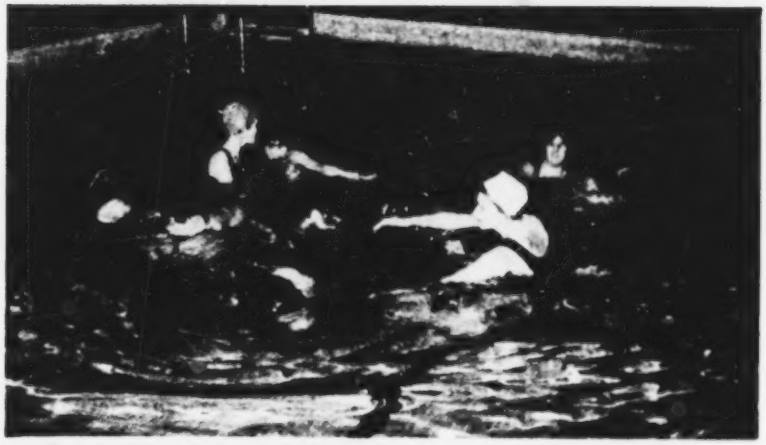
Once students have mastered the head turn, they can roll all the way to their stomachs, turn the head, and roll back to their backs. Instructors should provide only minimal assistance with hands at rib cage level. Better positioning can be achieved if instructors remember to keep their shoulders under the water.

Lateral rolls can also be practiced while passing a ball from person to person. Emphasizing a two handed pass (or one handed pass) rather than a hit or push forces the students to use more control and skill. Swimmers should also be again reminded to BLOW as soon as their faces near the water.

Students can also practice 360° rolls in a group. Note that for single rolls the instructor remains at the side of the student and rolls the student toward the instructor. When doing lateral rolls from instructor to instructor, the instructor moves to the head of the student and only assists with a roll to the side. When passing students the instructors' focus should be on the student that they are <u>receiving.</u>

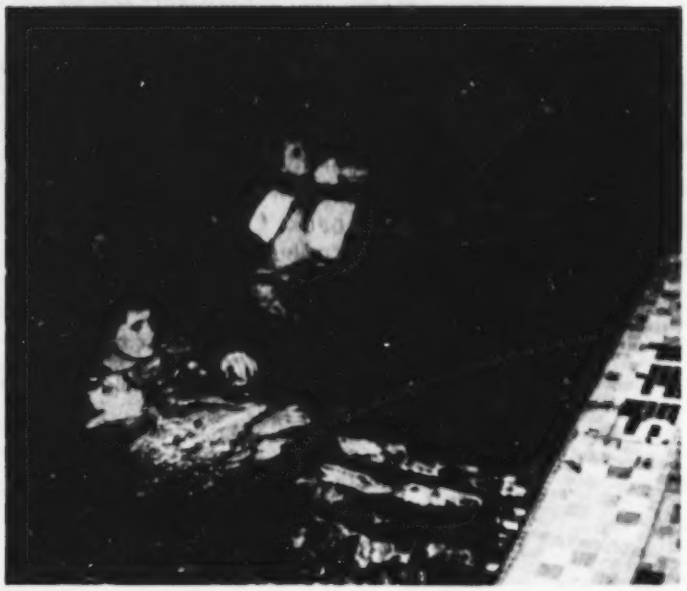
A more difficult group activity for practicing lateral rolls involved rolling from instructor to instructor. All students start floating on their backs.

On command students all start a lateral roll in the same direction.

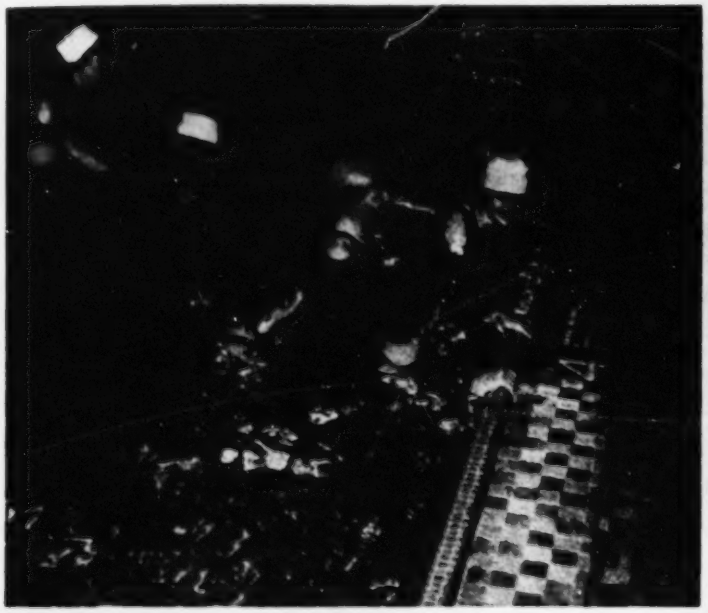


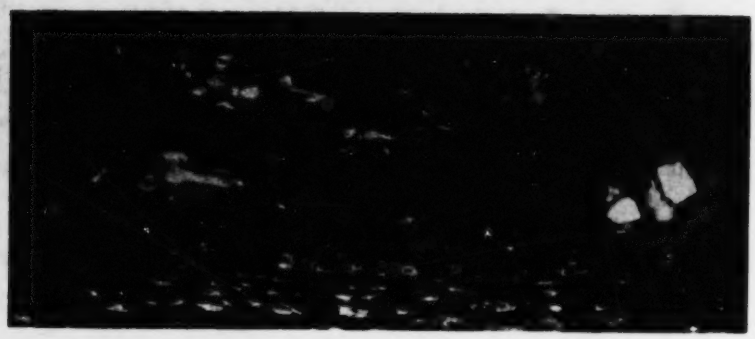
As soon as the students' faces are in the water the the instructors let go and move to assist the student who is moving toward them from the other side.

On completion of the roll, swimmers perform a vertical rotation and return to an upright position. Each student is now with a different instructor!

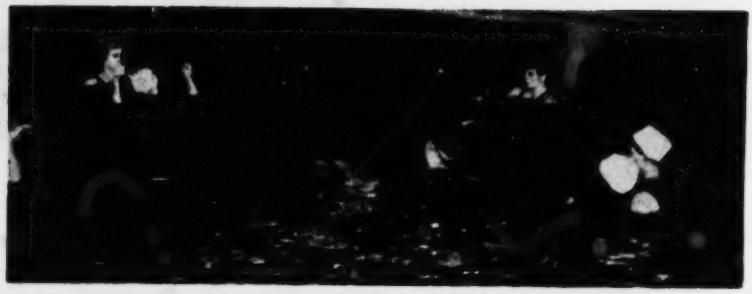


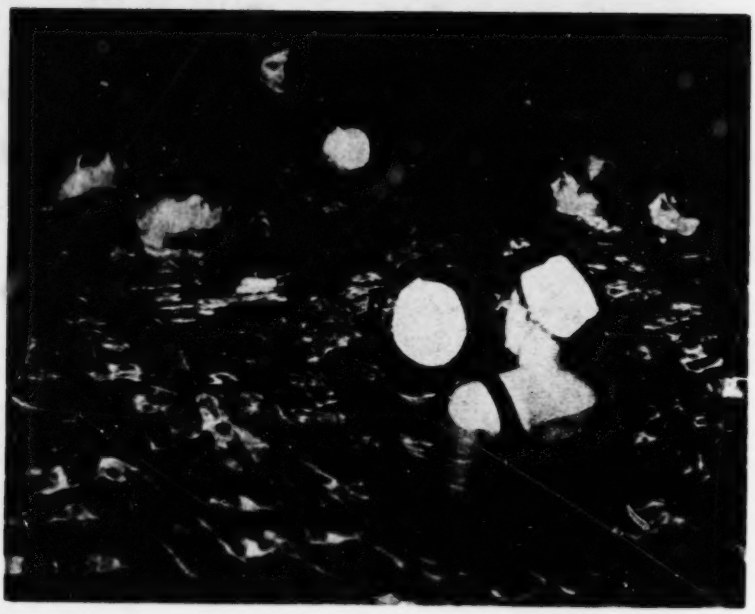
Group practice of vertical rotation also begins at the side of the pool. With the instructors standing behind their students, the students let go of the wall and rotate backward into a supine position. Instructors provide only minimal stabilization. On command, the students rotate back to the vertical. Then they can either bicycle kick and blow or rotate to prone and kick back to the wall. Throughout the activity the instructors maintain contact with their hands on the students' rib cage. When moving back from the wall, draw turbulance can be used with the more advanced students.



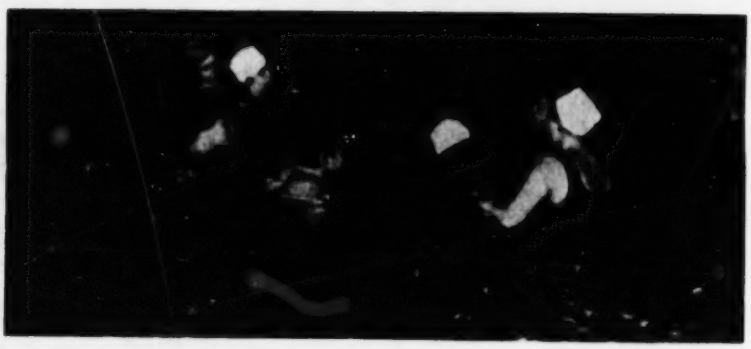


Vertical rotation can also be practiced from a circle formation. Starting with students positioned ahead of their instructors, each student tips back into a back float. Then using either draw turbulance or leg kicking, students move backward from the circle.



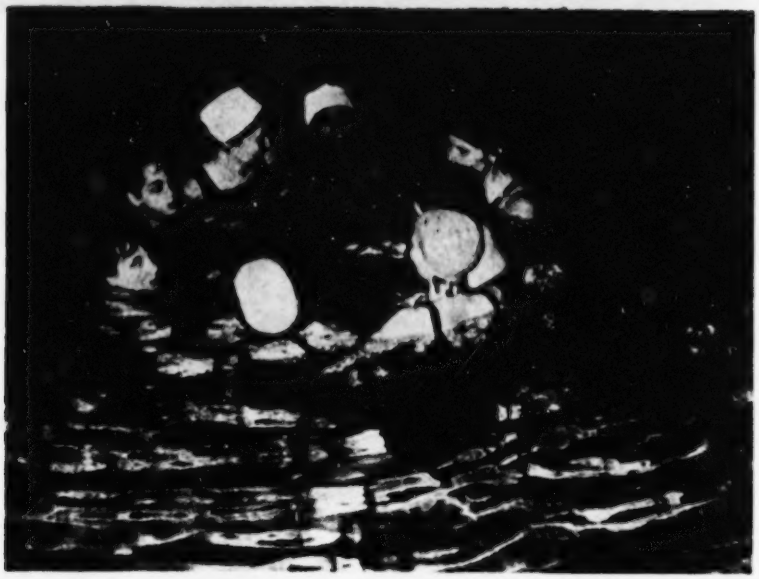


On command, students rotate up and into the vertical. Instructors can help by reminding students to reach and blow.

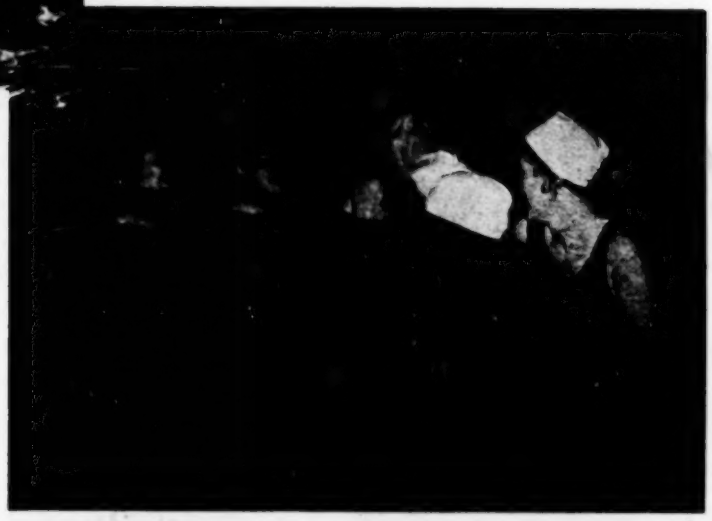


Once vertical, students can kick and blow to get back to the original circle. They could also continue the rotation and kick and blow in the prone position until they get back to their original place, where they would then rotate to a vertical finish.

Vertical rotation can also be practiced from the circle with instructors just holding hands. Hand contact can gradually be reduced until it is just barely a touch and then the students can float away from the circle and rotate vertically to return with complete independence.



TURBULANCE can also be enhanced by group experiences. In a circle formation students and teachers alternate positions around the circle with instructors reaching their arms under the arms of the students and grasping the students' hands at the wrist. Moving the circle alternately to the right and left at different speeds gives students a feeling of a current. Below the group is playing snake. The line-up is achieved by having the instructors place their student ahead of them. They then reach under their students' arms to grasp the rib cage of the next instructor. The object is for the head of the snake to "catch" the tail.



While moving in either the circle or shake the group can break away into floating.

GENERAL HINTS AND REMINDERS

-- The instructor should provide only minimal support and assistance -- only enough to keep the student's mouth above water to breathe. Often the instructor's hands serve as a fulcrum for the rotation action of the student's body.

-- The student and the instructor should keep their shoulders under the water at all times. This keeps both individuals warm and facilitates the proper arm/hand placement for the instructor.

-- The student should BLOW every time the mouth is in or near the water.

-- Most of the described skills can be developed concurrently. After these skills are mastered, more propulsive swimming skills can be taught.

-- When in doubt about how to help a student achieve a particular position, remember that it is the position of the head that usually controls the position of the rest of the body.

-- The main goal is independent functioning.

-- Though instructors work on a one-to-one basis with their students, Halliwick is essentially a group method. Students learn much faster and have a lot more fun doing it if they can participate in group learning activities.

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